

Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments presented are fully supported by the original application, including the drawings, and do not constitute new matter. Specifically, applicant notes the discussion at page 2, lines 10-14, page 5, line 25 - page 6, line 17, and Figs. 3-4 of the original specification.

Applicant also respectfully submits that the above amendments overcome the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-18 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, set forth at item 4 of the Office Action. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Examiner has rejected all claims (1-20) under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Barbieri et al. (US Patent Application Publication 2002/0070515), as set forth at item 6 of the Office Action. It is the Examiner's position that Barbieri's sliding device includes all of the limitations of the rejected claims.

Applicant's Response

Relative to such rejection, applicant encloses herewith a verified English language translation of priority Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-222245, which perfects applicant's claim of priority from the Japanese Application under 37 CFR §1.55. Correspondingly, applicant respectfully submits that the effective US filing date for the present application is 24 July 2000, which is prior to the 08 December 2000 filing date of US Patent Application Publication 2002/0070515, so that the patent publication cannot be applied as prior art against the present application.

Based on the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on the Barbieri patent is overcome, and accordingly it is respectfully requested that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Also, in relation to the Examiner's comment at item 10 of the Office Action regarding

the Barbieri patent publication, applicant and the owner/assignee of the present application respectfully submit that (to their knowledge) there is no relation between the present application and the Barbieri application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

At item 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dodge (US Patent 4,221,394), including his components 10 (guiding slide), 34 (boot binding mounting plate upper surface), and his connecting mechanism between 10 and 34 as shown in his Fig. 5.

Upon careful consideration, and (again) in view of the above amendments to claims 1 and 17, applicant respectfully submits that the snowboard of claim 18 is clearly patentably distinct over Dodge's snowboard, based on the foregoing argument regarding the deficiency of Barbieri relative to claim 1, which is not overcome by any additional teaching of Dodge, and because Dodge's supporting assembly is *directly contrary* to the feature of the invention as now set forth in claim 17. Particularly, Dodge's connecting mechanism shown in his Fig. 5 (including bolt 40, resilient pad 42, stand off plate 44 and mushroom shaped spacer) permits and facilitates pivoting movement of the boot mounting plate 28 relative to the guiding slide 10 (i.e., about the curved lower surface of the spacer 54).

In view of the foregoing, the rejection of claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is believed to be overcome, and accordingly it is respectfully requested that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

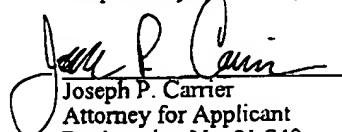
In conclusion, applicant has overcome the Examiner's rejections as presented in the Office Action; and moreover, applicant has considered all of the references of record, and it is respectfully submitted that the invention as defined by each of the present claims is clearly patentably distinct thereover.

The application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, and a notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner is not fully convinced of all of the claims now in the application, applicant respectfully requests that she telephonically contact applicant's undersigned representative to expeditiously resolve prosecution of the application.

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October 4, 2002

Respectfully submitted,

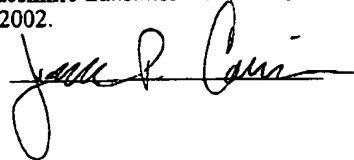
  
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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile transmission to the US Patent & Trademark Office, Art Unit 3618, on 04 October 2002.

Dated: 04 October 2002

JPC/ms  
enclosures



(Marked up copy of amended claims)

1. (Thrice amended) A snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:

an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof; and

an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof, and attached to an upper surface of the slide board in a substantially parallel and spaced relationship via a connecting member made of substantially non-compressible material; and

the connecting member retains the slide board and step board in a fixed, substantially parallel and spaced relationship in the immediate vicinity of the connecting member during use of the snowboard.

9. (Twice amended) A snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:

an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof; and

an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof, and attached to an upper surface of the slide board via a connecting mechanism made of substantially non-compressible material such that the slide and step boards remain in a fixed, substantially parallel and spaced relationship in the immediate vicinity of the connecting mechanism during use of the snowboard.

17. (Amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the slide and step boards are connected via the connecting member so as to substantially prohibit relative pivoting between the boards about the connecting member.

18. (Amended) A snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:

an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof;

an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof; and

a connecting mechanism made of substantially non-compressible material connecting

the step board to an upper surface of the slide board so as to substantially prohibit relative pivoting between the boards in the immediate vicinity of the connecting mechanism during use of the snowboard.